



# Student Constructed Responses

Helping students achieve the full value  
of each response

## Goals for this presentation

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- Understand how student constructed response items are developed
- Explore qualities of a full value response
- Develop strategies for instruction which improve student responses – in writing and verbally
- Understand the relationship of cognitive demand to standards, instruction, and assessment

Emphasize the concept of full value for a response

## Why a *student* constructed response?

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- Selected response checks literal comprehension, recall, general understanding [m.c., matching, etc.]
- Short constructed response allows deeper processing and higher order thinking
- A full essay is an extended response
- Student constructed response items may be used in any content area and in a variety of settings

This session will focus only on CR items, both long and short

## What are the characteristics of a good student response?

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- Consider both content and structure
- What you want is . . .
- What you get is . . .

Participants process each part to contrast what they typically get versus what they really want.

## The Stimulus

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- In order to create a good response, students must first develop a strong relationship with the stimulus – the source of information for their response.
- What do you want to know?
- Where do you want students to find their evidence?
- For this presentation, we will use a single text

Consider all sources of information – text, notebooks, experience/observation, video, research, anecdotal, etc. Help students feel more comfortable with the sources of evidence. You may want them to use multiple sources and synthesize information.

# Annotating Text

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- Read and annotate text:
  - Vocabulary:
    - Familiar word but unfamiliar use
    - Challenging
    - Critical in context
    - Unique to context

Think about words that student may need to know in order to improve comprehension or those which may be helpful for further discussion. You might want to create a list that students will find in the text and must use in their response.

## Annotating text

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- Important facts, dates, details
- Big ideas
- Language
- Author
- Purpose
- Audience
- Other ideas?

What elements of the text do you want students to know and use? Why did you select this text?

## Read and annotate the text

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- If you are working on a MacBook, you may annotate a PDF digitally in preview.
- If you are on a PC, you may want to print the text.

After reading, discuss the qualities of the text. Focus on what you would do in the classroom and how that would be different if students were doing the activity on their own.



## Teacher Constructed Items

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- Write two questions about the text that you would like students to answer.

Give participants a few minutes to craft a question the invite them to share their questions.

## Cognitive Demand

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- Many models of cognitive levels, building from Bloom's Taxonomy
- May be as few as three levels or as many as six
- Norman Webb's model is the most commonly used [University of Wisconsin] and consists of 4 levels
- Webb's DOK levels for reading can be found at:  
[http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ela/documents/dok\\_levels\\_ela\\_math-webb.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ela/documents/dok_levels_ela_math-webb.pdf)

## DOK and Standards

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- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- This is a standard. What level of cognitive demand does it imply in order to be met?

## DOK, Testing, and Your Classroom

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- What level(s) most often appear in the NECAP reading test?
- What level do you **mostly** *teach* in your classroom?
- What level do you **mostly** assess in your classroom?
- Do you consider DOK when *planning* lessons?

This would be a great time to insert a survey.

## Depth of Knowledge, Level 3

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Deeper knowledge is the focus; students show understanding of the text and go beyond

- Students explain, generalize, connect ideas across a text or among texts, identify abstract theme, apply prior knowledge, infer, plan
- Examples of DOK 3 item:
  - Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.
  - Summarize information from multiple sources to address a specific topic

This is a grade 6 standard. Survey – what grade level is this standard?

## The Student's Response

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- While it is important to have the right tool, focus should be on the content of the response and not the structure.
- Judge the soup and not the pot!



This is where we discuss structures of responses that may not be entirely helpful.

## Developing Items

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- Determine which is better for the information annotated: mc or cr
- Follow text order
- Consider whether a mc item might queue a cr or support it
- Include multiple DOK levels in item set

## Creating a CR Item

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- Verbs are important– look to Bloom's
- The **Item** should not be complex, even if the task is challenging
- **What** the student has to do to respond should be clear and in the forefront
- **Where** the student gets the evidence to respond must be included
- Key words may be in bold – **mainly, most likely, mostly**



## Creating a CR Item - samples

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- Describe the differences between Bob and Fred. Use examples from the text.
- Explain why a serpent **often** represents evil. Use information from *Harry Potter*, the video we watched last week, and the presentations we did in class.
- Determine whether the Smith article or the Jones article is **more** credible. Use information from the credibility meter to support your response.

Discuss the qualities of each. What makes them accessible and scorable?

## Activity

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- Write a constructed response item **at DOK level 3** using the text you annotated.

Give a few minutes to construct an item. Discuss qualities.

## Scoring Your CR Item

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- List the details students must/might use to respond to your CR item.
- Write the scoring language for your item's full value (to receive a score of 4).
- Is there a difference between the on-demand 4 and the over time 4?

Start with a description of what you want and make sure you have provided students with sufficient stimulus. If your students had unlimited time or the opportunity to have discussion about the topic, how might that change your expectations for full value?

## Scoring the CR

- To score a 4 point item:
  - 4 response is **thorough** and contains **relevant** support
  - 3 response is **sufficient** and contains **some relevant** support
  - 2 response is **partial** and contains **limited** support
  - 1 response is **vague** or **minimal**
  - 0 response is **incorrect** or **irrelevant**

General language for creating rubrics. Add detail specific to the task.

## Scoring Questions

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- What are the formats a student may use to respond to the CR?
- Does the format relate to score?
- Can you create a CR item if the stimulus material is from viewing, listening or speaking?

Discuss whether writing is important to the response. When it is a reading item, does writing count? What if students present a graphic organizer? Present the response digitally? What if it is spoken?

## In your classroom

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- How does any of this relate to classroom practice?
- What can you do in your classroom to help students provide stronger responses?
- How do strong CR responses relate to the big picture of your student's experience?

# SURVEY

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- We have created an assessment FOR learning that you can access by going to:  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/elacr>
- Completing this tool is intended to help you understand your own reading data, regardless of what tools you use.

## Resources

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- To review passages and item sets with rubrics and student work, go to NECAP released items:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/necap/released.html>

- You may also want to look at the NAEP tool at:

[http://www.maine.gov/education/mea/NAEP\\_docs/questions\\_tool\\_091009.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/education/mea/NAEP_docs/questions_tool_091009.pdf)



<http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/ela/index.html>

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**Patsy Dunton**

English Language  
Arts Specialist

[Patsy.dunton@maine.gov](mailto:Patsy.dunton@maine.gov)

**Lee Anne Larsen**

Literacy Specialist

[Leeann.larsen@maine.gov](mailto:Leeann.larsen@maine.gov)